

Staff Report

To: Mayor and City Council Date: 12/7/04 (w/s)
12/14/04 (formal)
Via: James L. Westbrook, Jr., City Manager
From: Cathy D. Ball, P.E., City Engineer Prepared by: Elizabeth Teague, AICP
Transportation Planner
Subject: Proposal for Bicycle Plan

Summary Statement: The consideration of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a proposal requesting \$24,000 in planning funds for the purpose of developing a \$40,000 comprehensive bicycle plan and to commit local match for Fiscal Year 2006 as needed.

Review: This project supports the Asheville 1998 Greenway Master Plan and 2003 Update, the 2025 City Development Plan, and the 2004 Transportation Demand Management Program Work Plan. It also implements several tasks in City Council's Strategic Operations Plan in the areas of:

- Planning, Goal #2, Obj. A, Tasks 1 and 2 – to incorporate multi-modal uses of transportation options and to leverage outside funding to achieve multiple transportation goals where possible.
- Planning, Goal #2, Obj B, Tasks 1 and 2 – to determine opportunities for managing traffic demand and to explore public-private partnerships with major employers and education providers to increase the effectiveness of the transportation system.
- Sense of Place, Heritage & Arts, Goal #3, Obj. B, Task #1 – to construct infrastructure including bicycle facilities to accommodate growth downtown.
- Natural and Built Environment, Goal # 2, Obj. A, Tasks 1-4 – to implement the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan and the Completion of several Greenways. (Note that the Reed Creek Greenway, the Hominy Creek Greenway, and the Azalea Park Connector Greenway are all funded through the NCDOT Bicycle Program and that their staff is encouraging a bicycle plan proposal from the City.)
- Natural and Built Environment, Goal #2, Obj. B, Task 1 – to work with the State to fund greenway projects via the Transportation Improvement Plan.

This proposal is supported by the Blue Ridge Bike Club and the Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, a volunteer group of citizens whose mission is “to educate the public about bicycle and pedestrian transportation, to advocate for the development and maintenance of safe, convenient and inter-connected facilities, and to promote the benefits of walking and bicycling for individual and community health.” The Task Force has assisted in the development of the proposal and is committed to assisting in the planning process.

The positives of this project are that it will:

- Better position the City to continue to pursue funding from the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and through the Transportation Improvement Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan processes;
- Provide \$24,000 or sixty percent of the total cost toward a \$40,000 planning process and enable the City to bring in a bicycle planning specialist;
- Provide a process and opportunity to directly involve the Council, public and interested stakeholders in the development of goals, objectives, and tasks related to improving bicycling in Asheville; and
- Collate, clarify and direct information regarding local bicycle issues and initiatives into one document and series of maps that support the 2025 Plan, Greenways Master Plan, and Strategic Operations Plan.

The negatives of this project are that it will:

- Require time from City staff to manage the contracting process and supervise the consultant; and
- Require a local match of \$16,000 beginning July 1, 2005. The Blue Ridge Bike Club has pledged support of \$1,000 toward this local match requirement, but the remaining \$15,000 will need to be committed for Fiscal Year 2006.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that City Council adopt the resolution authorizing the submittal of a proposal and the commitment of matching funds in the next fiscal year.

Attachment:
(1) Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO PURSUE FUNDING FROM THE N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, DIVISION OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE BICYCLE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, is implementing an initiative to encourage the development of comprehensive bicycle plans through a grant process that designates planning funds;

WHEREAS, this grant would provide sixty percent of the cost of the development of a Bicycle Master Plan, with the remaining forty percent to be covered by local funding beginning in FY2006;

WHEREAS, a comprehensive Bicycle Plan would help to implement a multi-modal and congestion management transportation program and the City's Greenway Master Plan as part of its Strategic Operations;

WHEREAS, a comprehensive Bicycle Plan would support the goals and recommendations of the City's 2025 Development Plan by making the City and downtown more accessible to bicycles;

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville staff shall be responsible for selecting and contracting with a consultant for the development of the Plan and for ensuring collaboration with the Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force and other stakeholder groups in the planning process;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to submit a proposal requesting \$24,000 from the N.C. Dept. of Transportation, Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, for the purpose of developing a comprehensive bicycle plan for the City and to match this grant with \$16,000 from local sources in Fiscal Year 2006 for this purpose.

Read, approved and adopted this the 14th day of December, 2004.

City Clerk

Mayor

Approved as to form:

City Attorney